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tional extension from an authorized headquarters to the public libraries and the school and special libraries of the United States. Considering the vastly important nature of its other and distinctly national tasks, the Library of Congress could not be expected to maintain an educational news service of Government publications for all libraries."

To return to the direct question before us. "We believe," says Mr. Tisdell, "that it is for the best interest of both Government and libraries that this service be established in the Superintendent of Documents Office." Now the Committees on Education of both the House and Senate do not agree with Mr. Tisdell, neither do the majority of librarians. The Council of the American Library Association, after a year's deliberation, yesterday (June 3, 1920), passed the following resolution:

WHEREAS, The National Library Service, which was established by the Bureau of Education, proved of such interest and value to librarians all over the country that when funds for its continuance lapsed the Boston Public Library established a current document service and published a monthly Government news bulletin, thus demonstrating the value of a local service and,

WHEREAS, The Boston Public Library and libraries in general cannot function satisfactorily without the aid of a national library clearing house, be it

RESOLVED, That the American Library Association in annual conference assembled at Colorado Springs, June 2 to 7,

1920, again expresses its confidence in such a service and urges the passage of S. 2457-H. R. 6870, a bill to establish a Library Information Service in the Bureau of Education and that a copy of this resolution be sent to each Senator and each Representative and that they be asked to support the bill.

Libraries are educational institutions and belong in that department of the Government which is supposed to deal with educational affairs. The Bureau of Education saw the need for a central library office and while war funds were available it established the National Library Service, which operated as a part of the Bureau for six months and appeared to meet a long felt though hitherto vaguely expressed need.

The usefulness of the service both nationally and locally has been demonstrated and the desirability of its permanent establishment is no longer questioned. The only question which seems to have delayed enactment of the legislation asked for appears to be the question of where the office shall be located. After all is said the most convincing argument in favor of the location proposed in the bills S. 2457 and H. R. 6870 is the fact that the Education Committees of both National Houses, the American Library Association and the librarians of the United States, after due consideration, have deliberately approved of locating the office in the Bureau of Education.

BUYING BOOKS FOR A CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT

By GERTRUDE ANDRUS, *Manager of the Boys' and Girls' Book Shop of Frederick & Nelson, Seattle.* Former Head of Children's Work in the Seattle Public Library.

To begin with, I want to claim from the audience the privileges due my sex. The first is the unlimited use of the pronoun "I," and the second is the personal application of all the experiences I have to relate. Christopher Morley says that the only pronoun in the feminine language is "I" and if you don't already agree with him, you will by the time I am through. Did you ever hear the story of the young man who was talking to his sweetheart

and said, "The trouble with you women folks is that you apply everything personally? To any chance remark you give a personal meaning." And the girl said, "But, Jim, you know I don't."

So now you are warned. I shall say "I" as much as I wish and I shall construe the subject of buying books for children to mean my personal experiences as a merchant.

Buying books for children is a topic

with two sides from the retailer's point of view. For not only does he buy books for children but he must sell what he buys. And it is from these view-points that I should like to consider the subject. Buying stock is one of the most difficult problems a book-dealer has to solve; and to be greatly successful he must possess a nearly uncanny second sight in order to vision the tastes and interests of his coming patrons. If he buys shrewdly, in the proper quantities, and of the right titles, the selling end of the transaction is robbed of more than half its worries. As one of my friends tells me, "it's easy enough to buy books. The hard thing is to know what not to buy."

Probably no one approached a first order of books with less knowledge and more trepidation than I did. My sole experience in the sale of books had been during the Christmas season at a local department store, where we had always been somewhat hampered by a lack of the kind of books we wished to urge. My library experience has been long, and I knew the kind of books that people borrowed, but whether they would buy the books they borrowed was a question to which I had no definite answer.

I slaved and prayed over that first order for exactly forty-two hours, and it was so small it was a joke. It would have stocked a good sized children's room, but it wasn't a drop in the bucket for the Christmas trade of a large department store. The order was no more than placed, before it became apparent that we should have to spend a good many more thousands of dollars. And here began my first experience with the publishers' representatives, the "peddlers," as they called themselves. To one, who for some time, must consider herself an outsider in the game of buying and selling, their methods, varying in quantity and quality, were of the greatest interest. But my thanks are due the majority of them for their aid in making a wise selection and for their suggestions as to selling helps.

Many of them looked on me with suspi-

cion because I was a librarian, remembering doubtless past encounters on the subject of series and best sellers lacking in merit. Some of them told me frankly that I didn't know what people wanted and that my plan of emphasizing the best books was too "high-brow." "It's volume of business you want," they said, "and you won't get it with that kind of stock."

It was hard to keep an open mind towards the books which might properly be termed "merchandise" because of low price, cheap make-up and poor literary quality. But book-sellers as well as librarians are likely to make the mistake of approving a book because of its well-known publisher and author and its high price, when the same author under another name may be writing for a publishing house carrying only the cheaper series.

It is well that librarians and book dealers should insist on a high standard of excellence, but it may be done without employing the "holier than thou" attitude which some of us assume in our book judgments. Librarians should be looked on by the book-trade as counselors rather than critics. I was pleased as well as chagrined when one of the traveling men said to me with the air of paying me a great compliment, "I'm glad to have met you. You are the most human librarian I've ever run across."

The purchase plan on which we have decided is a compromise. We continue to be "high-brow" but we will carry any book for which there is a popular demand, such as "Pollyanna" and the "Oz" books. We do not urge these books, but we sell them when they are asked for. We decline to carry the cheaper grade of series which have not even the faint claims to consideration possessed by "Pollyanna," "The Wizard," and "The Little Colonel." On this platform we have stood firm. If a publisher through excessive advertising creates a demand for a book which we know to be poor, we will include it if it can pass the very rudimentary tests we have established. On the whole, our buying is not so radically different from a library's except

that we buy in much larger quantities and stress books of information less. We also buy gift books which have too impractical a binding for public library use and inexpensive volumes, innocuous, and yet of too casual a character to be worth while in a library.

To some of you this may seem very commercial. To a merchant, on the contrary, it is very broad minded. The management of an ordinary department store will insist on volume of business and the amount of profit which the sale of these cheap series guarantees. But the organization with which I have the honor to be associated has decided against them, saying if they are not good enough to carry in the Book Shop they are not good enough for Frederick & Nelson to carry anywhere in the store.

When a customer asks for the *Boy Scout Series* we say that we have the books the Boy Scouts recommend to take the place of the series of which they disapprove, and we flatter ourselves that we have done many a good turn daily in discouraging the use, not only of the *Boy Scout Series*, but of others of the same brand. The substitution of a good book for a poor one is one of the most fascinating features of buying books for children, and we think with pride of the five-year-old who at our suggestion got a Burgess book instead of "Jiggs and Mrs. Jiggs," and of the little girl whose mother took Olive Thorne Miller's "Kristy," instead of "Elsie Dinsmore" to which she had been doomed. If we are asked for our opinion of a book which we disapprove, we give it frankly even though we have the book in stock to sell.

We are trying to make our Book Shop a place where people will like to come, whether they want to buy books or not. We want them to feel free to make it their headquarters for information of any kind about books. Many an inquirer have we sent to the public library to find a play suitable for graduating exercises or the cure for a canary bird's sore feet.

For the children we have two absolutely

certain methods of appeal. One is our tireless hobby horse for the little children, and for their big brothers and sisters there are the special shelves of books which they may take to the tables to read. When the chairs are full, they sit on the floor, and one lad was discovered lying on his stomach under the table, with his long legs neatly tucked away. His head and shoulders were in danger of being stepped on, but he was absorbed in "Animal Heroes" and was oblivious of his peril. This collection of books which may be handled serves a variety of purposes. It makes the Book Shop a place where the children like to come, it keeps them away from the regular stock and it advertises special books.

The majority of people have only the faintest idea of what they want, except that it is for a boy of nine or a girl of five and that it must not exceed a certain price. If it fills these requirements and has a quantity of gaudy pictures, they buy it at once without giving a thought to the quality of the text. I suppose sixty per cent of our sales are made to people of this type and ten per cent to people who know definitely what they want and the remaining thirty per cent to people who want something good but don't know what. They know good books and have an admirable taste in literature, but they are as ready for suggestion as the folks whose criterion is the bright book jacket and the lurid illustration.

If this large percentage of people buy books without knowing what they want until they are told, why is it that our Christmas exhibits of books in the library attract relatively so small a group? It is because the process of choosing a book in the library is too widely separated from the transaction of buying the book in the store. Moreover there is the uncertainty of finding the book in the store which one has selected in the library.

That the public library has a strong hold on the confidence of the people has been demonstrated by the Seattle library, which for several years has sent assistants to a

local store at Christmas to aid customers in the choice of their children's books. The regular book clerks may know quite as much about the books as the library assistant, but the customer often looks upon the latter with greater favor, probably because she realizes there is no commercial interest in the librarian's recommendation.

The influence of the public library on people's reading is already very great, and, with the closer relationship between bookstores and libraries which is sure to come, that influence will grow and strengthen. The book dealer who decries the public library as a menace to the book business has scant vision and does not see that in fostering book lovers libraries are creating book buyers.

One of the most notable events in book-selling last year was the Children's Book Week which was sponsored by many libra-

ries all over the country. It will be repeated this year, the second week in November, and any library which fails to take an active part in this movement is forced to admit itself indifferent to the spread of the gospel of good books.

Remember this: *Librarians are a big factor in the world of books, but their power is increased tremendously by an alliance with the booksellers. Give the book dealer all the help he asks for. If he doesn't ask for it, offer it. If he doesn't know enough to accept it, keep on offering until he does. Publishers, booksellers and librarians are all headed toward the same goal and it is through their association that buying books for children can be made a profitable investment for all concerned, including the ultimate consumers—the children.*

RELATIONS OF PUBLIC AND SCHOOL LIBRARIES

BY MARION HORTON, *Principal, Library School of the Public Library, Los Angeles, California*

In addition to numerous articles on the inspirational work of the school library and Mr. Certain's admirable recommendations for standardizing library organization in secondary schools, we need a survey of school libraries for a basis of co-operation by the library and schools. If a joint committee representing the A. L. A. and N. E. A. could make a survey of actual conditions, showing what school libraries have achieved in different places, we should have a basis for constructive co-operation in all parts of the country. We can glean statistics from school libraries that are partly or entirely under the direction of public libraries from the public library reports, but school libraries under boards of education rarely publish their annual reports and it is necessary to compile data from school surveys or from comments more or less systematically published in library periodicals. A school library survey for such cities as New York, Pittsburgh, St. Paul, Chicago, Seattle, Port-

land, Los Angeles and typical smaller cities, with details of administration and appropriation ascertained and co-ordinated would give invaluable data and clarify the ideas of school and library officials who wish to co-operate but are vague about details. To be effective this survey should include a frank statement of the advantages and disadvantages of the administration of the school library as it is now as well as theories for improvement.

With this official survey to represent group consciousness there is also an individual responsibility. Both librarians and teachers need a better understanding of the work of the other. Assistants in public libraries, especially children's librarians, could do much more intelligent work if they knew more about modern educational methods. Many of the ideas on which the project method, educational measurements or silent reading tests are based could be applied in the reading of children and older people in the public li-